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Gateway to China

Pathway to Peking starts in the Pointes

By PATRICIA CHARGOT
Free Press Staff Writer

From the outside, it looks like any other successful suburban dentist's office, with its colonial brick facade that blends in with all the other one-story shops and offices in Grosse Pointe Farms.

Hardly the kind of place to arouse the interest of the CIA and the FBI.

But something else is going on at 18100 Mack. The first clue is Dr. Robert Everett, saying as he ushers a visitor from the waiting room into a labyrinth of offices: "The door on the right is to dentistry. The door on the left leads to China."

Beyond the left door is where Everett, 61, resides as president of China-U.S. Exchanges, a non-profit charitable organization he created in 1981 after the first of his 33 trips to the People's Republic of China.

With little fanfare but with former U.S. Ambassador to China Leonard Woodcock as its senior consultant, the group has become a powerful intermediary in arranging professional exchanges and attempting to foster good relations between the United States and China.

Last week, the Michigan Department of Transportation asked China-U.S. Exchanges to help organize and promote the department's first trade mission to Szechwan, China, in April.

Last year, Everett said, he and his 18-person staff organized 65 delegations of U.S. professionals

— from lawyers and architects to family therapists and interior decorators — to meet with their counterparts in China.

This year, he said, the number will be 150, 45 more than People to People, the well-known exchange group founded 30 years ago by Dwight Eisenhower, sent to China last year.

Because the trips involve exchanges among professionals, they are tax-deductible, and the corporation's profits go into a scholarship fund for Americans who study in China and Chinese in the United States.

"You wouldn't believe how exciting this is," said Everett. "Our growth has been so phenomenal."

"WE HAVE contacts in China like nobody else has," he said. "We have been accepted there because of our scholarship grants and because of Leonard Woodcock being our senior consultant, because of his image and respect."

Everett also has ties to the CIA and FBI.

Because China-U.S. Exchanges sponsors some Chinese delegations in the United States and supports studies here with grants, the CIA "debriefs me about every six months," Everett said.

"They just come in and ask me about people who are coming here and record their names. The FBI comes in, too — they come in more frequently — they like to know who they are."

Chi Xiong, 31, and Wang Dianyi, 28, for instance, are studying in the United States on one-year, \$25,000 China-U.S. Exchanges grants.

Wang, a graduate of Canton Foreign Language Institute, is a first-year law student at Northwestern University in Illinois. The American Bar Association arranged for her to study here after she acted as an interpreter for their Board of Governors meeting with the Ministry of Justice in Peking in 1984, arranged by China-U.S. Exchanges. The association plans to pay for the rest of Wang's education when her grant runs out.

Chi, whose career plans were thwarted by the Cultural Revolution, is a freshman at St. Mary's College of California in Moraga, Calif., majoring in business administration.



Free Press Photo by WILLIAM ARCHIE

Dr. Robert Everett: "We have contacts in China like nobody else has."